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THE GULL



Golden Gate Audubon Society Berkeley, California Volume 71 Number 10 November 1989

NOVEMBER: *pro esteros*

Saving the Coastal Marshes of Baja

A board member GGAS first learned about a grassroots conservation group named *pro esteros* about a year and a half ago. The word reached us soon after *pro esteros* was formed because one of the founder's main interests is the California Least Tern, a species with which GGAS has been particularly concerned. Another shared value of the organizations is the preservation of coastal marshes. In California we are now trying to save the precious 5% of the saltmarsh that was present 100 years ago. The pristine marshes and the estuary (esteros) in Ensenada and San Quintin—located just south of the California border—became seriously threatened by development in the spring of 1988. A group of US and Mexican biologists and conservationists met and organized to deal with these threats and formed *pro esteros*.

Barbara Massey, an Adjunct Professor of Biology at Cal State University, Long Beach, will be our speaker on Nov. 9, 1989 in Berkeley. She has been doing research on endangered species of birds for almost 20 years, starting with the California Least Tern. She has also conducted long-term studies on the Light-footed Clapper Rail and Belding's Savannah Sparrow. Planning saltmarsh restoration also involves much of her energy. In 1975 Barbara got interested in Baja when she investigated the area for nesting Least Terns. In 1980 she began counting Clapper Rails in Ensenada and San Quintin. During one of these counts she met Silvia Ibarra, a Mexican ecologist who studies eelgrass. When hotel development threatened the entire Estero de Punta Banda Silvia and Barbara teamed up with others to form *pro esteros*. Their goals now include establishing a reserve system for the vast marshes in Baja California.

The work of *pro esteros* and the very special ecosystems to be found in the extensive saltmarshes of northwest Baja will be the focus of Barbara's slideshow and talk. Perhaps the US will be able to use these esteros as models for California's restoration projects. Waterfowl and shorebirds in abundance make use of these rich esteros as they travel the Pacific flyway. Many winter there. The Light-footed Clapper Rail, a US endangered species, can be found in the Mexican marshes in greater numbers than the entire US population.

Please come to the Northbrae Community Church at 941 The Alameda, Berkeley, at 7:30 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 9. Learn about the cooperation of Mexicans and Americans to preserve irreplaceable marshes.

P.S. There will be a Nov. 9th pot-luck-brunch-meeting for members and potential members of *pro esteros* at 9 a.m. to noon at the Richardson Bay, Tiburon. Call Lina Jane Prairie (549-3187) for more information.

BARRIE ROKEACH IN DEC.

GGAS does not usually have a membership meeting in December, but one is scheduled for Dec. 7 at 7:30 p.m. at Northbrae Community Church in Berkeley. This opportunity came to us after our schedule of meetings had been confirmed, and the board decided to present GGAS member Barry Rokeach's slide illustrated talk (see *The GULL* for October, p. 144.) because of its interest.

Mr. Rokeach and his publisher have agreed to an arrangement for GGAS to use his book, *TIMESCAPES* as a fundraiser. Copies will be available at the GGAS office and at the meeting for sale at the special price of \$26.75 including sales tax.

The GULL mistakenly referred to the book by its sub-title *CALIFORNIA FROM THE AIR* in its last issue.

FIELD TRIPS CALENDAR

Sunday, November 5—Rodeo Lagoon.

Wednesday, November 8—Mini-trip to Aquatic Park, Berkeley.

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For details on the above, see *The Gull* for October.

Saturday, November 11—Birds of Strybing Arboretum, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco. Meet at 8 a.m. at the front gate near Ninth Ave. and Lincoln Way. We will look for birds in the various habitats of the Arboretum. Beginners, and all others, welcome. Leader: Alan Ridley (566-3241).

Sunday, November 12—Point Reyes National Seashore. Meet in Inverness Park at the Knave of Hearts Bakery on Sir Francis Drake Blvd. at 8 a.m. We will concentrate on shorebird identification at Abbott's Lagoon and Limantour Estero. Bring scopes if you have them, lunch and liquids, and comfortable walking shoes. Heavy rain cancels (If in doubt, call.) Leader: Lina Jane Prairie (549-3187). (✓)

Sunday, November 19—Palo Alto Baylands. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Duck Pond. Take Hwy. 101 south to Palo Alto, exit at Embarcadero and drive east toward the yacht harbor and Baylands Refuge. The Duck Pond is on the left just beyond the Palo Alto Airport. Bring lunch, scopes, and clothes for rain and mud. We should see waterfowl, rails and shorebirds. Leader: Bob Hirt (408/446-4478). (✓)

Thursday, November 23—Fifteenth Annual Thanksgiving outing to Point Reyes National Seashore. Meet at 9 a.m. at the Larkspur Ferry Terminal, Section H, or at 10 a.m. at the Point Reyes National Seashore Headquarters (one mile west of Olema). We hope to see alumni of previous years and welcome newcomers to this tradition. We will have a leisurely day of birding

and hiking. We generally see an excellent variety of waterfowl, shorebirds and landbirds. The day will end with a Thanksgiving dinner at 4:30 or 5 p.m. at Jerry's Farmhouse (about \$12) in the town of Olema. No reservations needed for trip or restaurant. Bring a light lunch, scope (if you have one), and clothes for cool windy weather. Leader: Barry Spitz (454-2769). (✓)

Saturday and Sunday, November 25-26—Gray Lodge and Sacramento Wildlife Refuges. For this two day trip, meet on Saturday at 9 a.m. in parking lot #14 at Gray Lodge. Drive east on I-80 15 miles beyond Davis to route 99 exit. Go north 52 miles on route 99 to the town of Gridley. Turn left (west) on Colusa Hwy. and continue five miles to Pennington Rd. Turn left and follow signs to Gray Lodge Wildlife Refuge. (There is no lodge at Gray Lodge.) Proceed through the checking station to parking lot #14. We will caravan through the refuge on Saturday, and through the Sacramento Wildlife Refuge on Sunday. Allow two and one half hours driving time from the Bay Area. (AAA map of Feather River is helpful.) For accommodations the Blue Gum Willows Motel, off I-5 at Willows, (916/934-5401) is suggested, and camping is possible at the state park in Colusa. Bring lunch, scopes, and clothes appropriate for the valley in November (chilly). Heavy rain cancels trip. Leaders: Peter and Dolores White (229-1714). \$(✓)

Saturday, December 2—U.C. Davis Raptor Rehabilitation Center. Meet at noon. See how tender loving care can return disabled raptors (including eagles, owls, and several species of hawks) to their natural habitat. Hear Terry Schulz, Raptor Rehabilitation Center supervisor, describe procedures to avoid human imprint on birds prior to their release, discuss raptor biology,

and explain the objectives of the Center's programs. After this fascinating visit we will caravan to Spreckel's Pond for shorebirds and to other nearby areas to look for Short-eared Owls. Trip ends at approximately 5 p.m.

To get there: Take I-80 east to the U.C. Davis off-ramp. Turn south (away from freeway) and across the railroad tracks. Continue one-half mile to the top of a rise (do not cross the bridge) and turn left on the dirt road. Continue 200 yards to parking area. Allow one and one-half hours driving time from East Bay. Bring lunch. Leader: Terry Schulz: (916/752-6091). (✓)

Saturday, December 9—Monterey Bay and Coastal Areas. Meet at 9 a.m. in Monterey at the foot of Coast Guard Pier. Bring quarters for parking.) We will bird this area then drive north, stopping at various spots including Moss Landing. We will be looking for loons, grebes, gulls, and rocky coastline species. Bring lunch and a scope if you have one. Leader: Don Starks (408/226-4134). (✓)

Wednesday, December 13—Min-trip to Lake Merritt, Oakland. Meet at the Rotary Science Center at 9:30 a.m. Take Grand Ave. east, cross Harrison St. and turn right on Bellevue to the Rotary Science Center on the right. This is a good opportunity to review waterfowl. Lunch optional. Rain cancels trip. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (351-9301) and Jean-Marie Spoelman.

Trips marked with \$ go to parks and other sites that require an entrance fee.

Carpooling arrangements will be attempted for trips marked (✓). Call the GGAS office: 843-2222.

FIELD TRIPS COMMITTEE



OBSERVATIONS

August 22 through September 25

The fall migration was quite spectacular through the period with shorebirds and vagrant eastern warblers highlighting the event. The Point Reyes Bird Observatory reported ideal landbird migration conditions during most of September, "calm and cloudy with 5-10 miles visibility." Southeast Farallon Island reports are for July 14 through September 23 and are courtesy of Point Reyes Bird Observatory (PRBO).

Tubenoses through Hawks

A Laysan Albatross was seen by pelagic birders out of Monterey Aug. 27 (DLSh, JCl, mob). Four Northern Fulmars were north of Fanny Shoals off of Marin Co. Aug. 27 (ToJ), one dark morph Northern Fulmar was seen south of The Farallones Sept. 3 (ToJ), and one was found on a Monterey pelagic trip Sept. 9 (AD). Two Flesh footed Shearwaters Sept. 10 and one Sept. 11 were found in Monterey Bay (DLSh). Two Black-vented Shearwaters were seen near Moss Landing on a pelagic trip Sept. 8 (RS), and one Black-vented was viewed on Monterey Bay Sept. 11 (DLSh). A Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel at SE Farallon July 27 provided the seventh Island record. Wilson's Storm-Petrels were found on pelagic trips out of Monterey: one Sept. 11 (RS, DDeS, *fide* AD), and two Sept. 24 (BHi, THK, CSp). Ashy Storm-Petrels began to appear in late August, and a flock of 5000 on a pelagic trip out of Monterey Sept. 3 included about 250 Black Storm-Petrels (DLSh).

White-faced Ibis sightings came from several locations during September: one at Hayward Shoreline Interpretive Center Sept. 4 (JaH), twelve to fifteen near Pt. Reyes Station Sept. 8-9 (LSi, KH), and thirty-eight at Lower Tubbs Island Sept. 13 (DN). An eclipse

plumaged male **King Eider**, found in the cove below New Willows at Pt. Reyes Aug. 30, remained through the period, giving many observers good views (GFi, mob, ToE). One male Harlequin Duck in eclipse plumage remained at Ano Nuevo from May 29 through Sept. 9 (JBr, mob). Another Harlequin in eclipse plumage was seen off Lover's point, Pacific Grove Aug. 22 (*fide* RFT).

Hawk watching from Hawk Hill, Marin Headlands, produced over twenty sightings of Osprey by Sept. 9, one Northern Goshawk Sept. 4 (all CLF), over twenty Broad-winged Hawks by Sept. 21 (CLF, JLD), and a Golden Eagle Sept. 22 (JLD).

Shorebirds

We received many reports of Lesser Yellowlegs, Semipalmated, Baird's, and Pectoral Sandpipers for the fall migration period. This data is much appreciated and is stored on computer, sent to the *American Birds* regional editor, and available to interested observers. Lesser Golden-Plovers appeared in good numbers from Sonoma to San Mateo Co. coastally and at least two strayed to Alameda Co. from late August through the period (mob). At least nine were reported as *dominica*, about nine as *fulva*, and three to six caused lots of confusion. Whatever will we do when/if these races are split? A winter plumaged **Mongolian Plover** visited the field east of the RCA Station at Pt. Reyes Sept. 22 through the period (RS, JM, AG, mob), the second Mongolian to reach our area this fall. A **Eurasian Dotterel** appeared on SE Farallon for one day only Sept. 15 (TSc, *fide* KH). Four Solitary Sandpipers (in addition to the six during last report period) found our area Aug. 24 through Sept. 7 (mob). Fifty-six Wandering Tattlers at SE Farallon Island Aug. 17 were surprising numbers. An

Upland Sandpiper was glimpsed on SE Farallon Aug. 27; then on Sept. 21 one was found dead there. A juvenile **Bar-tailed Godwit** was at the mouth of Pescadero Creek Aug. 20-Sept. 9 (RSTh, JM, mob, ELb). A Sharp-tailed Sandpiper found its way to SE Farallon Sept. 2-3, a fourth Island record. A juvenile **Curlew Sandpiper** at Lake Merced, San Francisco Sept. 17-20 (ASH, JM, SMo) was a rare treat. A juvenile Stilt Sandpiper was at Bolinas Sewage Ponds Aug. 22-28 (KH, DAsh, et al.); up to two reached Salinas Sewage Ponds Aug. 27-Sept. 4 (MPa, JiD, DSg); one visited Pescadero Marsh Sept. 14-17 (RSTh, BHi); and another was reported from Hayward Shoreline Sept. 9 (MFu). A Buff-breasted Sandpiper lingered on the Santa Cruz coastline from Natural Bridges State Beach to Wilder Beach Aug. 28-30 (DEG, *fide* DLSu, CKf). Three Ruffs arrived: a juvenile at Salinas Sewage Ponds Sept. 1-10 (RMrr, DEG, JiD, MDu), a juvenile female at Horseshoe Pond, Pt. Reyes Sept. 2 (KR, mob), and a juvenile at Mendoza Ponds Sept. 23-24 (MH, JM, mob).

Fall is the time of the year to find Jaegers close to shore as well as over the ocean, Parasitics dominating this phenomenon; so somewhat unusual was a Pomarine Jaeger chasing terns off Alameda South Shore Sept. 12 (JMR). On pelagic trips out of Monterey one South Polar Skua was seen Sept. 9 (RJR, mob), four were found Sept. 10, and one was present Sept. 11 (DLSh). A winter adult Little Gull visited Horseshoe Pond Aug. 20 through Sept. 18 (DWm, mob, FGB). Sabine's Gulls away from the immediate ocean were one at Tracy Sewage Ponds Sept. 11 (DGY) and one at Charleston Slough Sept. 17 (JMD).

A **Thick-billed Murre** found in the kelp off Cannery Row Sept. 8 was

joined by another Sept. 10 (RS, DLSh, mob). Three to four **Thick-billed Murres** were seen on pelagic trips out of Monterey Sept. 19, Sept. 23 and 24 (JLD, PJG, AB, mob). Six Xantus' Murrelets were viewed from a pelagic boat out of Monterey Aug. 27 (DLSh), and one was found on a pelagic trip to The Farallones Sept. 9 (GMF). Single Craveri's Murrelets were seen by pelagic birders out of Monterey Sept. 3 and Sept. 8 (RS, DLSh).

Doves through Vireos

Two wandering White-winged Doves reached SE Farallon, one Sept. 3 and another Sept. 13-14. A **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** visited SE Farallon Sept. 8-9, a fourth Island record. One Least Flycatcher was seen at the Fish Docks Aug. 31 (RS, JM), and another was reported from New Willows Sept. 12 (THK). Six Least Flycatchers found SE Farallon Island Aug. 27-Sept. 21. Five Eastern Kingbirds were tallied at SE Farallon Aug. 21-Sept. 8. Another three to four Eastern Kingbirds were discovered at Pt. Reyes: one at Spelta Plateau Sept. 3 (RKO, DAsh), one at Abbott's Lagoon Sept. 4 (ASH, AD, LJP), and on Sept. 9 one at the Lighthouse (DWh), and one at Mendoza Ranch (*fide* BBrr) which may have been the same bird. An immature Mountain Bluebird landed on a pine at Hawk Hill in front of startled observers Sept. 2 (CLF).

A Philadelphia Vireo was found at Middle Lake, Golden Gate Park Sept. 24 (MBu). One Red-eyed Vireo dropped in on SE Farallon Sept. 12. Two others were discovered at Pt. Reyes: one at the Fish Docks Sept. 9 (DWh), and one at the Lighthouse Sept. 12 (THK).

Eastern Vagrant Warblers

The following table of warblers lists 133 individuals (137 for fall) of 16 species. The table is organized

chronologically within species, more or less, with the exception of SE Farallon data which I list first, and except for geographical lumping (Pt. Reyes, for example).

Tenessee Warbler (total 16)

1 SE Farallon	Aug. 26-29	PRBO
2 Bodega Bay	Sept. 1	DN
	Sept. 16-17	
1 Hayward Shoreline	Sept. 4	RJR
1 Pt. Reyes-Lighthouse	Sept. 5	GFi
3 Nunes	Aug. 27,31;	RS,JM
	Sept. 9	BBrr
	Sept. 20	GFi
1 Fish Docks	Sept. 9-10	DWh,MJL
1 New Willows	Sept. 12	fide, GHg
1 Mendoza	Sept. 13	RS
1 White House Pool	Sept. 4	TCo,KG
1 S.F.-G. Gate Park	Sept. 9	SMo
2 Ft. Funston	Sept. 13;23	DPM
1 J.V. Fitzgerald MR, San Mateo Co.	Sept. 9	DKe

Chestnut-sided Warbler (total 3)

2 SE Farallon	Sept. 7-12	PRBO
1 Pt. Reyes-Mendoza	Sept. 6	MLR
1 S.F.-G. Gate Park	Sept. 12-13	JSC

Magnolia Warbler (total 11)

6 SE Farallon	Sept. 9-19	PRBO
2 Pt. Reyes-Fish Docks	Sept. 4-6;	MJL,MLR;
	Sept. 10	MJL,RKo

2 Bodega Bay	Sept. 7;15	DN
1 J.V.Fitzgerald MR	Sept. 18	DKe

Black-throated Green Warbler (total 1)

1 SE Farallon	Sept. 8	PRBO
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Blackburnian Warbler (total 5)

3 Pt. Reyes-Mendoza	Sept. 4 (2);	AD,LJP;
	Sept. 13	RS,MLR,KG

1 S.F.-Ft. Funston	Sept. 9	SMo
1 Bodega Bay	Sept. 11	DN

Prairie Warbler (total 2)

1 Monterey Pelagic (9 miles west of Cypress Point)	Sept. 3	DLSh
1 Pt. Reyes-Road Forks	Sept. 12	RS

Palm Warbler (total 5)

2 SE Farallon	Sept. 21-22	PRBO
2 Pt. Reyes-Mendoza	Sept. 19;23	FGB;SSC

1 Ano Nuevo	Sept. 24	RSTh
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Bay-breasted Warbler (total 1)

1 Pt. Reyes-Mendoza	Sept. 11-13	EDG,MLR
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Blackpoll Warbler (total 18)

9 SE Farallon	Sept. 5-20	PRBO
1 Bodega Bay	Sept. 6-7	DN
1 S.F.-Lincoln Park	Sept. 6	ASH
2 Pt. Reyes-Lighthouse	Sept. 8;12	EDG;THK
2 Nunes	Sept. 15-17	EDG,RJR
	Sept. 22-24	RS,JM

2 Mendoza	Sept. 13	RS,MLR
1 Pescadero (town)	Sept. 24	RSTh
Black-and-white Warbler (total 5)		
3 SE Farallon	Sept. 7-12	PRBO
1 Pt. Reyes-Lighthouse	Sept. 7	MLR
1 Nunes	Sept. 11-13	EDG,RS
American Redstart (total about 39; total for fall about 40)		
Scattered liberally throughout our area and too numerous to enumerate.		
Ovenbird (total 6)		
5 SE Farallon	Aug. 19-22 (1);	PRBO
	Sept. 5-11 (4)	
1 Pt. Reyes-Lighthouse	Sept. 7	MLR
Northern Waterthrush (total 12; total for fall 14)		
5 SE Farallon	Aug. 21-28 (3);	PRBO
	Sept. 3-9 (2)	
1 Pt. Reyes-Nunes	Sept. 1-2	SMo,RS
1 Fish Docks	Sept. 6	MnS
1 Five Brooks	Sept. 24	DES,PEG
2 Bodega Bay	Sept. 5-9;20	DN,NTC, BDP;DN
1 Coyote Cr. Riparian	Sept. 6	MDa, fide JMS
1 S.F.-G. Gate Park	Sept. 7	RKo
Connecticut Warbler (total 1)		
1 SE Farallon	Sept. 13	PRBO
Mourning Warbler (total 5)		
5 SE Farallon	Sept. 6-20	PRBO
	(adult Male 9/6-9)	
Canada Warbler (total 2; total for fall 3)		
2 SE Farallon	Sept. 8	PRBO
Grosbeaks through Orioles		
Three Rose-breasted Grosbeaks wandered to SE Farallon Aug. 28-Sept. 20. Two reached San Francisco: one at Lincoln Park Sept. 8 (ASH), and another at Sutro Baths Sept. 17 (DSg). A female Indigo Bunting was seen at Hole in the Head, Bodega Bay Sept. 7 (DN). With the exception of nineteen Clay-colored Sparrows scattered through our area (mob), vagrant sparrow numbers were down from last year. Only two Brewer's Sparrows were found: one at SE Farallon Aug. 31, and another at Nunes Ranch Sept. 16 (BCh). One Black-throated Sparrow was discovered along the road to Pt. Reyes Lighthouse Sept. 14 (GFi). A Sage Sparrow was well described near the Lighthouse Sept. 11 (fide THK). The Lighthouse had two Lark Buntings, one Aug. 31 (TSc), and another Sept. 8		

(DFW). SE Farallon had one Lark Bunting Sept. 3-5, A White-throated Sparrow Sept. 18 through the period, an early Lapland Longspur Sept. 6 and another Sept. 20, a Chestnut-collared Longspur Sept. 20, and five Bobolinks Sept. 7-17. Two other Bobolinks reached Pt. Reyes: one at New Willows Sept. 9-10 (DWh, MJL), and another at Spaletta Ranch Sept. 16 (MPe, BCh). Two Northern orioles of the "Baltimore" variety brightened up Pt. Reyes with one at the Fish Docks Sept. 9 (KH), and another at the Lighthouse Sept. 24 (BDP).

Observers: Dick Ashford (DAsh), Bruce Barrett (BBrr), Florence G. Bennett, Joe Broyles (JBr), Mark Butler (MBu), Bill Chilson (BCh), Josiah Clark (JCl), Nancy T. Conzett, J. Scott Cox, Maryann Danielson, James Danzenbaker (JiD), J. Michael Danzenbaker, Dave DeSante, Ann Dewart, Jon L. Dunn, Michael Dunn (MDu), Todd Eastly (ToE), Art L. Edwards, Al M. Eisner, Doug Ellis (DE2), Carter L. Faust, Gary M. Fellers, George Finger (GFi), Marcia Furry (MFu), Doug E. George, Al Ghiorso, Phil E. Gordon, Peter J. Grant, Edward D. Greaves, Kevin Guset, Keith Hansen, Jay Harlow (JHa), Mark Headney, Kevin G. Hints, Bob Hirt (BHi), Alan S. Hopkins, George Hugenberg (GHg), Tom Johnson (ToJ), Dan Keller (DKe), Clay Kempf (CKf), Ted Koundakjian, Richard Kovak (RKo), Jeri M. Langham, Earl Lebow (ELb), George Ledec (GLE), Mike J. Lippsmeyer, Robert V. Merrill (RMrr), Joe Morlan, Scott Morrical (SMo), Daniel P. Murphy, Dan Nelson, Mary Nordstrom, Benjamin D. Parmeter, Michael Patten (MPa), Magnus Persmark (MPe), Point Reyes Bird Observatory (Farallon report thanks to Petery Pyle), Lina J. Prairie, Dave E. Quady, Kurt

Rademacher, Jean M. Richmond, Robert J. Richmond, Mary Louise Rosegay, Ruth A. Rudesill, Tim Schantz (TSc), Debra Love Shearwater (DLSh), Larry Silver (LSi). Dan Singer (DSg), Jean-Marie Spoelman, Chris Spooner (CSp), Rich Stallcup, Maurey Stern (Mns), Betty Jo Stevenson, David L. Suddjian (DLSu), Ron S. Thorn (RSTh), Robert F. Tintle, David Wharton (DWh), David Wimpfheimer (DWm), Dennis F. Wolff, David G. Yee.

Please Report observations to Northern California Rare Bird Alert: 528-0288 or 524-5592.

—HELEN GREEN

Observations Editor
2001 Yolo Ave.,
Berkeley, CA 94707

CHRISTMAS COUNTS SCHEDULED

The GGAS board set the date for the Oakland Count as Dec. 17 and the San Francisco Count will take place Dec. 28. We are counting on all the regulars and we need lots of first time counters. Please volunteer.

Lina Jane Prairie and David Rice will compile for Oakland and Dan Murphy and Alan Hopkins for San Francisco. Barbara Rivenes, Office Manager, will be providing her usual support. Call any of them for information. Dan's phone number is 564-0074.

The 1989 GGAS Counts T-shirt will feature a Tufted Duck, design by Alan Hopkins. More in *The GULL* for December.

CONSERVATION NOTES

LIVERMORE WETLANDS?

Yes, and a very special type known as the alkali sink scrub, mostly extirpated elsewhere in central California by development. Here grows the largest of four remaining populations of the endangered palmate bracted birds-beak (*Cordylanthus palmatus*). Vernal pools and interesting geological phenomena occur also, in this complex. Migrating shorebirds and waterfowl use this area in season and a variety of predatory birds including the Golden Eagle hunt here.

This biologically significant area of some 500 acres is close to Springtown on the northeast side of the Livermore Valley. The city already owns and has promised to preserve for public use 300 acres. The remainder is threatened under private ownership. Already off-road vehicles have heavily damaged some of this. The regional office of the Department of Fish and Game has applied for Proposition 70 funding to acquire some 170 acres. The Department Director is Pete Bontedelli, and the address is 1416 9th St. Sacramento, CA 95814. The US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Nature Conservancy are both deeply interested in the fate of this resource. *The Springtown Wetlands Must Be Saved!*

—PAUL F. COVEL

THE MOUSE THAT ROARED

No major seasonal wetland has been lost to development for several years. The threats are always there, developers constantly propose new projects on these wetlands, but we have been able to withstand these attacks.

A prime reason for our successful defense of these wetlands has been the presence of the Salt Marsh harvest

Mouse, a unique species of our Bay. It's probably the only land mammal in the world that survives by drinking salt water. It is found in San Francisco tidal and seasonal wetlands, and nowhere else. It is no wonder then, that with the Bay's loss of 85%–90% of its historic tidal wetlands that this mouse is a federally listed Endangered Species.

Because the mouse is endangered, a direct result of habitat loss, the US Fish and Wildlife Service (Service, hereafter) has several times denied development projects on wetlands through what is called a Jeopardy Opinion. A part of the Federal Endangered Species Act, this allows the Service to deny development projects to preserve endangered species habitat.

The mouse has been found on nearly all of our threatened seasonal wetlands. And if not actually found, there is always the likelihood that it will be found if enough trapping is done. In addition, the Service had developed a Recovery Plan for the Mouse which identifies sites necessary for its future continued existence.

As a result, the mouse has proved to be a great weapon in defending Bay wetlands.



But it now appears that this all may change. During the eight years of the Reagan Administration, the Bay Area had been extremely lucky in terms of Service staff. Both in Sacramento (our local office) and in Portland (our Regional Office, next up in authority over the Sacramento Office) There have been dedicated, career, wildlife professionals who based their decisions on science and a love for our natural resources. Their duty is to preserve those resources and they acted to do that. They were, for the most part, not swayed by politics.

And so we survived the last eight years. With the Bush Administration, many Reagan upper-echelon Service appointees had to look for new jobs outside Washington, D.C. But they brought with them their Reagan environmental agenda. And the Bay Area is now faced with one such man.

The new Deputy Regional Director in charge of the Endangered Species Program is Robert Smith. Previously, he had a high position in the Service's Endangered Species office in Washington. The controversy surrounding the Spotted Owl in which the Service was found to have altered the scientific evidence to prevent listing the species as endangered was centered in the Washington office. After discovery, the decision was thrown out in federal court and the Service is in the process of listing the species as endangered.

What role Robert Smith played in this less than ethical behavior (the Service Director who was responsible for this alteration of findings has been fired) we don't know. However, in a recent meeting Mr. Smith said that he saw his role as that of "constraining" his employees. He said that the Service staff were among the most dedicated in the government. So dedicated, in fact, that he had to constrain them from per-

forming their jobs too enthusiastically.

This is chilling, and it leads to a presumption that our endangered species will no longer enjoy the protections they have had in the past. The first sign of this new attitude has already become apparent.

Under the Endangered Species Act there is provision for Habitat Conservation Plans (HCP). This section allows for the destruction of endangered species and their habitat for development purposes if it can be demonstrated that the developer will create appropriate mitigations so that the species will not face any increased threat of extinction due to the project.

In the case of the Harvest Mouse, a creature that has lost 90% of its traditional habitat, its hard to imagine any further loss that would not impact its chance for survival. Yet a proposal is now being entertained.

The Portland office has been having meetings with the proposed developer of the Mayhews Landing property. This property is a 125 acre wetland habitat that shelters one of the largest populations of Harvest Mouse still extant. It is a mix of wetland and upland. The mouse requires both for survival, using the upland during high tides and storms and for feeding. The developer plans to create a 65 acre HCP mouse park out of this area and use the rest of the land for development.

The local Sacramento Service staff has adamantly opposed the concept of HCP on this site. But it now appears that the Portland office is about to overrule them. Shades of the Spotted Owl, where Service biologists were overruled and their analysis replaced by those of biologists hired by the timber industry. Here, our local service biologists are being overruled and instead, a plan developed by a biologist hired by the developer is apparently being accepted.

Once one HCP becomes fact it is likely that other developers will seek similar arrangements for their wetlands. And our wetland resource will suffer one loss after another.

Please help us stop this attack on the Bay. Please write a letter to save our wetlands. Please write Marvin Plenert, Robert Smith's boss, in Portland, and tell him that an HCP on Mayhews Landing is not acceptable. That for a species that has lost 85%-90% of its habitat any further losses must not be allowed. The HCP for Mayhews proposes to create a new wetland area using pumps and modern technology. We know of no such mechanistic project that has proved successful. You may write that the HCP should not be allowed because of the real risk that the wetlands creation would not be successful and we cannot take chances with any endangered species habitat. It's important to tell Plenert simply that an HCP at Mayhews Landing should not be allowed.

A short, individual letter is best. Your help on this issue will count. If you want help, or information for this letter you may call me at 282-5937. Your letter should go to:

Marvin Plenert
Director, Region I
US Fish and Wildlife Service
1002 NE Halladay St.
Portland, OR 97232

—ARTHUR FEINSTEIN

Audubon AND THE GULL

DEAR EDITORS

I have just read Ted Williams' July 1989 "Incite" article, "Game Laws Weren't Written for Fat Cats." I generally enjoy reading Williams, whether or not I agree with him, and

chuckle over the fiercely indignant responses his articles produce in the letter column.

I enjoyed this article too, until I reached this sentence in the midst of his discussion of a game sting operation in the San Luis Valley of Colorado: "According to the town fathers of San Luis, the rumors among non-Hispanics that it is dangerous for them to enter the valley will have to be dispelled 'before the tourist trade can grow dramatically'." This racist sentence, as well as much of the related discussion, was completely extraneous to the topic of the article—the violation of game laws by public officials—not race relations in Colorado. I noted that Williams did not identify the racial or ethnic background of any other persons discussed in this long article. In addition, the feeling I got in the pit of my stomach when I read this section seemed familiar. A quick check through other recent *Audubon* issues refreshed my memory: In Williams' March, 1989 "Incite", he condemned "the Eskimos" as a group for the horrendous hunting practices of some Eskimos, and breezily stated that Eskimo culture was "as dead as the Greak Auk". Again, in Williams' many articles about hunting, he does not dismiss the beliefs, ethics and traditions of all Caucasians because of the horrendous hunting practices of those Caucasian individuals he writes about.

Those active in the mainstream environmental movement in this country tend to be overwhelmingly Caucasian. (This is not true of, for example, citizens fighting toxic waste dumping in their communities, for poor and minority communities tend to be selected for this honor.) This writer is no exception, but as the adoptive mother of South and Central American children with Hispanic and indigenous roots, perhaps

the racism here was more obvious to me than to most *Audubon* readers. Environmentalists (including Williams in his September "Incite" article) often state the wish that our movement become genuinely multiracial and multiethnic, but the publication of such smears does nothing to promote this desire. Ironically, the heavy Hispanic San Luis Valley was, as of five years ago (and may still be) the most solarized community in the United States, whose banks would not consider a mortgage loan without an explanation of why solar utilities were not being installed. I know, because I selected them as an example to inspire other communities in a book I wrote at that time. The San Luis Valley Energy Center (again, as of five years ago) had distributed at low cost to other communities across the country 20,000 copies of a manual on how to build their low-cost, locally designed solar collector, and had brought hundreds of junior and senior high school students from across the US to the valley to learn solar and weatherization techniques. This is hardly the community the National Audubon Society should want to insult with the sort of treatment accorded by Williams.

I fully understand that Williams' articles are meant to be provocative. *Audubon* has editorial responsibility, however, to draw the line at publishing racist remarks. Racist remarks do not promote thought or debate; they simply provoke hatred.

Sincerely,
JOAN BODNER

(415) 566-0291

THE GULL invites suggestions from GGAS members on how this chapter might contribute to making our movement more inclusive and more representative of the ethnic and racial

richness of the San Francisco Bay Area. The letter writer also invites calls from members interested in the issues she raises.

Editor

NATIONAL CONVENTION: Challenged by Growth

Eight hundred Auduboners, birders from all parts of the country, from National's various staffs in New York and Washington, from its various regions, all converged on Tucson, Arizona for the biennial convention September 12-16. Everyone participated in a huge variety of activities of field trips, workshops, plenary sessions, and social activities that enabled everyone to discuss issues ranging from the reintroduction of the thick-billed parrot in Southeastern Arizona to the North American Waterfowl Management Plan to the Biosphere Reserve status of Sian Ka'an in Mexico to the global population crisis. The convention provided endless opportunities for sharing information, getting help, meeting old friends and making new ones, and for just plain having fun.

Running through the entire convention was its theme, "Our Southwest... Challenged by Growth," a topic that applied not only to water rights and land-swap deals in Arizona but also more widely to the destruction of ancient forests in the Northwest, to air quality on a national basis, and to development pressures on pristine estuaries in Baja California.

The growth issue was discussed fully, richly, controversially by the dynamic opening night speaker Paul Ehrlich, Stanford University professor and NAS board member. No one in the entire convention came close to Dr. Ehrlich in covering the vastness and complexi-

ty of this disturbing issue that is our present and future reality. Offering a mathematical equation, $I = PAT$, that is, the *Impact* upon habitat, on the life support systems of our planet, is a product of *Population* times *Affluence*, or consumption of capital, times *Technology*. Pulling no punches, calling a spade a spade, Dr. Ehrlich synthesized facts, scientific theories, computer models, political realities, with a dose of philosophy into a riveting lecture that left the conventioneers shaking their heads, laughing uproariously, gasping in amazement. Dr. Ehrlich may speak of gloom and doom, but no one at the convention felt like slitting his wrists. Instead, as the superb teacher he is, with a good bit of the stand-up comedian in him, Dr. Ehrlich got the attention of the 800 birders, activists, scientists, and staff; he shook them out of their preconceptions and stirred them to action. His message: each of us can make a difference by focusing our time and energy on small issues to avert the disaster that unbridled development is leading the world to.

The field trips provided by the convention enabled many Easterners to add birds to their life-lists, to visit such areas of scenic splendor as the Chiracahuas but the trips also provided a valuable learning experience in conservation matters even for those from Arizona. Visiting the newly established San Pedro Riparian national Conservation Area, I was excited at the prospect of seeing a Green Kingfisher (not this time!), I was delighted by the 36 miles of lush cottonwood groves in the midst of the Sonoran Desert, and I was interested in the rich historical features of the area. More importantly, I was intrigued by the innovative manner by which this unique habitat was acquired. Through an intricate land-swap, involving federal, state, and local govern-

ments, and private developers and land-owners, the BLM, under the astute guidance of Dean Bibles, exchanged land near Phoenix for this priceless riparian corridor. Furthermore, to insure the area's restoration, 27 irrigation pumps were retired to raise the San Pedro's level, and cattle grazing is forbidden for the next fifteen years to bring back the native grasses. I encourage all, the next time you are in Southern Arizona to visit this precious asset to our environment.

As it is impossible to cover the entire convention, let me briefly and haphazardly relate other details:

- Congressman Mo Udall was awarded Audubon's "Guardian of the Environment".
- John Borneman of Western Region held forth hilariously at the auction of bird feeders designed by architectural students of the University of Arizona.
- A Preview showing of NAS's latest video on the Ancient Forests made for an emotion-packed plenary session.
- Jewell James of the Lummi tribe in Washington spoke eloquently of the tragic loss of his tribe's ancestral forests to the logging industry. he urged Audubon and other conservation groups to work hand-in-hand with his tribe, as well as other ethnic groups around the world, to achieve our common goal.
- Birdathon news: this year 205 chapters participated, plus staff and leaders, raising a grand total of \$893,700.

Finally, I encourage everyone to attend the next Audubon Convention, to be held in Orlando, Florida in 1991. It will turn your life around.

TOM WHITE, President

DIRECTORS STRUCTURE GGAS FUNDS

The Board of Directors of GGAS recently adopted a revised structure for the Society's funds. At the suggestion of the Finance Committee, the purposes of the various funds were clarified and some new funds were created. The Board's monitoring of the Society's finances will be improved and our friends have some new opportunities to focus their gifts on particular program areas.

GGAS receives gifts from members and nonmembers and from the estates of friends who remember the Society in their wills. We also receive a portion of the dues members pay to the National Audubon Society and we earn interest on our "endowment." All of the assets owned by the Society, other than short term cash deposits, are held in one or another of our "Funds." Under the new structure, we have the following Funds:

BAYSHORE FUND: This Fund, long associated with the accomplishments and generosity of Elsie Roemer, is dedicated primarily to projects involving the San Francisco Bay. At present, a principal project of the Bayshore Fund is the support of field studies of the Least Tern.

SANCTUARY FUND: A major portion of this Fund is restricted to use for the acquisition of sanctuary lands. The balance of the Fund is dedicated to the improvement of wildlife habitat and of access for wildlife observation.

LEGAL FUND: This Fund may be used only for funding legal action (administrative proceedings and lawsuits) involving wetlands or other environmental issues of importance to the Society. The Director may authorize expenditures on the recommendation of the Conservation Committee.

EDUCATION FUND: Education of the public on environmental issues is an important function of the Society. This

new Fund was created to build an endowment for educational projects. Only the income of the Fund is expended annually. This year, the income will be expended in large part to provide "Audubon Adventures," a publication for children from National Audubon Society, to elementary school classes in San Francisco and the East Bay.

INCOME ONLY FUND: This is our general "endowment." It is made up of gifts restricted by the donors to expenditure of only the income, as well as other monies the Directors have determined to add to the Fund. Only the income is spent and the income is considered general revenue each year in our budgeting.

FUND FOR UNRESTRICTED GIFTS: This is the Fund to which most major, unrestricted gifts are allocated. The income of this Fund also is considered general revenue for each year's budget. The Directors may vote to spend the principal of this Fund, although it is the policy of the Board that principal will not be expended under normal circumstances. By retaining the ability to expend principal, the Directors can respond to extraordinary needs of the Society.

In addition to the major Funds, there is a Life Membership Fund, holding the life membership dues paid to GGAS, and a Revolving Fund for Fundraising, used to provide seed money for fundraising projects.

Gifts to any of the major Funds are gladly accepted. The Board has the greatest flexibility with unrestricted gifts, but recognizes that you may wish to earmark your gifts for the Education, Sanctuary, Bayshore, Legal or Income Only Funds. Questions about the Funds, or about planned giving through estates and trusts, should be sent to Steve Margolin, Chairman of the Finance Committee, who may be reached at the phone number on the back of the *Gull* or by mail at our GGAS office address.

FALL BIRDING CLASSES In San Francisco

Part B of our Fall Semester classes taught by *Joe Morlan* will be starting Oct. 31, Nov. 1 and 2. The Tuesday classes are an introduction to birds and birding. Wednesday classes will cover hawks and gamebirds, and Thursday classes will cover grossbeks, buntings and sparrows. All classes will meet 7-9:30 p.m. in room 222 at the Marina Middle School, 3500 Fillmore at Bay. The cost is \$45 for each seven-week course. Students need not take Part A to enroll in part B classes. For more information call the school at 776-8247 or see *The GULL* for September.

EXTENDED FIELD TRIPS TIME TO PLAN AHEAD

Chris Carpenter, Extended Field Trips Director for GGAS, unveiled the plans for 1990 at the September meeting of GGAS in Berkeley.

The trip to Texas for the spring migration is set for April 21-28. It is a true nature spectacle. With the right weather patterns, "fallouts" of migrating birds literally fill the trees along the Texas coast. The last GGAS Texas tour had 32 species of warbler! All of the birds are in full breeding plumage. Many of the birds are so exhausted from the trip across the Gulf of Mexico that they land at your feet. In addition to the migrating birds we will concentrate on as many of the Texas specialties as possible.

The tour will cover a variety of the Texas habitats, including both the upper Texas coast and the eastern pine forests. Spring is an excellent time to be in Texas and we should have warm days and cool nights. Even the notorious Texas mosquitos are not too bad at this time of year.

The tour is limited to eight participants, and a fee of \$125 is charged for services provided by the leader and includes a

donation to GGAS. All participants pay for their own lodging and meal costs and share ground transportation costs. Participation is not advised for anyone who is not in good health and fit condition.

This trip will be led by Chris Carpenter. He has been leading and organizing popular tours for many years. He has led tours to China, Kenya, Peru, Panama, Costa Rica, Mexico, Texas and throughout California. This will be his third trip to Texas. He is very adept at finding birds and showing them to others.

Further details and conditions will be supplied on request from the GGAS office. Look for an announcement of a trip to Rwanda and Kenya in October 1990 next month in *The GULL*.

THE SEED SALE AND THE NEXT ONE

The first seed sale of the season was a great success. There is still some seed, and if you missed it, call the office and we may be able to hold some for you.

The next opportunity will be Jan. 13, 1990. Order forms will be in *The GULL* for December.

LAKE MERCED IN TROUBLE

If you have visited San Francisco's Lake Merced during the past three years you noticed the constantly decreasing water level. During the drought years this was understandable, but with the increased rainfall last year we assumed the lake's level would rise once again. This has not been the case. In fact the water level continues to drop. The southern end of the south lake is isolated by a sand dune and is losing water much faster than the rest of the adjoining lake. We understand this condition stems from yet undefined problems with the aquafer.

It is nice to see a few shorebirds, and to add species such as Semi-palmated Sandpiper and Curlew Sandpiper to our

various lists. However it is not nice to see the loss of major portions of the marsh which surrounds the lake.

Lake Merced is edged by one of the largest fresh water marshes on the central California coast. It provides habitat for numerous marsh species including Sora and Virginia Rails, Black-crowned Night Heron, Great Egret, Great Blue Heron, Green-backed Heron, Marsh Wren, Common Yellowthroat and Song Sparrow. Casual observation indicates Green-backed Heron numbers are down. Since the only census data is in the form of Christmas Bird Count reports, we can only speculate as to the impact on birds. The impact to the lake isn't hard to observe though. Great brown spots mark the pre-drought shore. Weed covered dunes and extensive mud flats replace open water. Elsewhere, marsh vegetation encroaches on open water, and hastens the day when dredging will be required to reopen the lake which serves as a back-up reservoir. Recreation too has been impacted. Fishing beaches are high, dry and weed covered. Water temperatures are up. Our lake is a mess!

A partial solution to this problem is to replenish the lake's water. The San Francisco Water Department can release water into Lake Merced from its peninsula reservoirs. However, even though water rationing is no longer necessary, they have not yet chosen to do so. Your letter to the general manager can help influence the department to exercise its responsibility to maintain the water level of Lake Merced and to insure the quality of the lake's water.

Urge the San Francisco Water Department to establish minimum water depth guidelines for Lake Merced. Tell them how important it is to assure water quality, not only for the fishermen and

boaters who use the lake, but for the wildlife which depend on Lake Merced throughout the year. Let them know you care, and let them know you want action. Write to Arthur Jensen, Acting General Manager, San Francisco Water Department, 425 Mason St., San Francisco, CA 94102. We would also appreciate it if you sent a copy to the GGAS office at 1250 Addison St., #107-B, Berkeley, CA 94702.

—DAN MURPHY

ALASKA MEMO

To: Peter Berle (not dated)
From: Dave Cline

Ever since the Exxon Valdez went aground in Prince William Sound, my office here has been a seven-day-a-week, round-the-clock operation, while we've tried to link volunteers and supplies with bird and animal rescue centers. On my behalf, please thank all the Auduboners who sent checks to help out up here. Their dollars and concern have meant so much.

But as hard as we've worked, the results are discouraging. My colleagues among wildlife professionals project that more than 100,000 birds of over 35 species have died. The rescue centers report that they are so overloaded they simply cannot accept any more birds or otters. Thousands of seals are giving birth to pups on contaminated shores. And today I received reports of oil covered bears feeding on the carcasses of oiled birds along the beaches.

Exxon's cleanup has proved a complete failure. Because of their ineffectiveness, oil slicks have travelled hundreds of miles, contaminating pristine beaches in Katmai and Kenai Fjords National Parks. And after all this time, not a single mile of the 730 miles of

ruined coastline has been totally cleaned up. I'm glad as can be that Audubon is leading the legal battle against Exxon.

But, of course, legal action is only part of the answer. As you know only too well, we also need laws to prevent another spill like this from ever happening again. Now, more than ever, we need to push our six-point action plan through Congress:

- 1) Require a thorough examination of the entire Alaska oil delivery system.
- 2) Require updated and stringent oil spill contingency plans with strict penalties for non-compliance.
- 3) Conduct a comprehensive study of the effects of wildlife leading to a full protection plan for Alaska's marine environment.
- 4) Establish a joint federal-state oil and gas monitoring team to independently oversee the industry.
- 5) Close the loop-hole exempting oil field waste from federal hazardous waste laws.
- 6) Require construction of state of the art recycling facilities on Alaska's north slope.

We'll have a hard fight to win these points in Congress. I still believe our real hope is strong public support. Audubon members must flood their senators and representatives with letters and calls.

DESERT PROTECTION ACT

Oct. 28 in Bishop and Nov. 11 in Barstow the House Interior Subcommittee on National Parks and Public Lands will focus on HR 780 and S 11, the California Desert Protection Act. These hearings will be one most important single step in the effort to enact the

legislation. Conservationists need to attend and speak out in favor of the act now.

A recent General Accounting Office analysis stated "BLM has frequently allowed the needs of competing interests, such as recreation (Off-Road Vehicles) and commercial use, to take precedent over wildlife interests when conflicts have arisen." The Desert Protection Act was drafted in response to this failure to protect resources and because of the national significance of the natural and cultural values in the California Desert. Introduced by Senator Alan Cranston and Representative Mel Levine, the bills are opposed by Senator Pete Wilson and local representatives. For this reason a strong showing is very important.

The Wilderness Society is organizing transportation by bus and car-caravan. You can call Jeff Widen at (213) 387-6528 if you can attend and/or make a statement at one of the meetings. A written statement should be sent immediately to the House Subcommittee on National Parks and Public Lands, Room 812, House Annex 1, Washington, DC 20515.

THE BACK YARD BIRDER

I can't tell you how many hours I spent trying to sneak up on a bird so that I could put salt on its tail, thereby taming it! This is just one of countless superstitions surrounding birds. Birds have always been familiar to human beings and therefore avian life has been a part of our folk lore and myths, religions and our arts (painting and sculpture, music and literature).

Christopher Leahy (*The Bird-watcher's Companion*) offers several reasons for the importance of birds in the whole spectrum of human activities.

- (1) Birds easily lend themselves to anthropomorphic characterization—the wise owl, the vain peacock, the noble eagle—even more than most of our nearer relatives, the mammals. Could it be that they walk on two legs, erect, as we do?
- (2) Among other animals, only birds are as vocal as we are, using vocalizations for communication and *seeming* to sing purely for pleasure.
- (3) Birds remind us of ourselves in their family life. We also perform elaborate and silly courtship rites, build “nests”, provide food for the family and have family “outings.” Even though many mammals have these same habits, they are far less conspicuous than birds.
- (4) Birds can fly, a non-human feat that we envy and have tried to emulate.

Throughout time, man has tried to explain things he doesn't understand by explaining it as beyond our power or even “supernatural.” We also try to link the inexplicable with things we *do* know that seem to have some connection. e.g. Since we have seen birds soar out of sight into the heavens it might seem that they have supernatural powers. They also live in ways which, until very recently, were mysterious. They would disappear or transform themselves for parts of the year! To the native Americans it made sense that the Great Spirit was a “sky father”, embodied in the sun and associated with the powerful, high-soaring eagle. In the U.S. we use the Bald Eagle as our national symbol, projecting an image of both nobility and might.

Because of their seasonal comings and goings, birds were used in temperate zones to schedule planting and harvesting. Certain birds have also

been thought to predict weather and seasonal change. You can imagine that geese, cranes and swallows were especially helpful. Loons are known as “rain geese” among such diverse cultures as the Scottish Highlanders and the Indians of the northwestern U.S. They are supposedly very noisy before rain. Swallows feeding low is another sign of rain, the logical reason being that wet and turbulent upper air forces aerial insects downward.

There are numerous superstitions involving birds surrounding fertility (cranes, e.g., are thought to be good for crops), the souls of human dead (e.g. storm-petrels represent the souls of drowned seamen) and death and disaster (foretold by the presence of owls or members of the crow family).

Here are a few curious superstitions: a bird crossing one's path to the left or the right is lucky or unlucky depending upon your beliefs; it's good luck to see a red bird fly up but bad luck if it flies down; wrens nesting near a house are good luck; it's bad luck to break a bird's egg; it's good luck to break off the larger piece of a wishbone; owls hooting in the daytime are bad luck; if a bird flies against your house it's an ill omen (*or* maybe your windows are too clean!); the first Bluebird in spring is lucky; 3 birds flying in a line is good for business; your wish will come true if you throw 3 kisses to the first Robin of spring *or* if your wish is made when you see 3 birds on a wire.

Whether or not you believe in any of these folk tales, these bits of lore are based on observations by ordinary people over the ages. Actually they come closer in some cases than the elaborate explanations and “scientific” hypotheses by far more sophisticated scholars!

—MEG PAULETICH

WETLANDS SERIES

By the time you read this you may or may not have had the chance to scurry across the bridges to witness a Bay Area World Series (at the time I write this our teams are still battling it out), BUT your program chairman has already cinched a both-sides of the Bay **WETLANDS SERIES!** The upcoming Grand Slam of Golden Gate Audubon Programs will focus on wetlands, and provide insights into the birdlife that depend on them.

Barbara Massey of *pro esteros* will lead off at the top of the order for the November Program (Nov. 9 in Berkeley). Barbara will talk about the work of her team, *pro esteros*, in preserving the coastal marshes of Baja. These marshes are a stopover for Pacific Flyway birds and wintering grounds for wildfowl that spend a part of their lives in the Bay Area. This will be an appropriate lead-in for our January program (Jan. 11 in San Francisco) by Lynn Stenzel of Point Reyes Bird Observatory (PRBO). Lynn will talk about the Pacific Flyway Project, in which many Audubon members have participated.

February's meeting (Feb. 8 in Berkeley) will feature a panel discussion on wetland issues: Bill Tuhey of the San Francisco Estuary Project, Barry Nelson of Save San Francisco Bay, and Art Feinstein of GGAS, will exchange ideas on wetlands and other Bay issues.

Batting "clean-up"—Jules Evans of PRBO will share his studies of Black Rails at the March 8th meeting in San Francisco.

So, regardless of whether you practiced commuting across the Bay Bridge, or missed the opportunity, here's a

series where we can all root for the same side—WETLANDS. Hope to see you there.

—JOELLE BUFFA

BEST BIRDING IN NAPA AND SOLANO COUNTIES

The Napa-Solano Audubon Chapter has just issued at \$5 (including tax and postage) a book of the above title listing site descriptions, special bird and botanical pointers, directions, maps and photographs for 21 birding locations. To order your copy send your check to Dorothy Salvato, 702 Via Palo Linda, Suisun City, CA 94585. Her phone number is (707) 864-0516.

BAY AREA BIRD PHOTOS

The December meeting of Bay Area Bird Photographers at Baylands will be Wednesday, Dec. 6 at 7:30 p.m. Rod Noren will describe his trip to Peru with ornithologist Ted Parker.

NEWS FROM THE RANCH ANNUAL APPEAL

Audubon Canyon Ranch's annual appeal letter should reach you by mid November. This is our yearly effort to raise operating funds for the Ranch's education, research and preservation programs. Your generous support is essential to the continued operation of this marvelous sanctuary. If you don't hear from us you need only send your tax deductible check to Audubon Canyon Ranch, 4900 Hwy. 1, Stinson Beach, CA 94970.

WELCOME

ACR proudly announces the election of officers who will serve for the coming year, and directors and advisors who begin two year terms. All are unpaid volunteers who generously give their time to attend bimonthly board meetings. Officers sit on the executive committee which meets on alternate months. All board members and advisors serve on one or more of ACR's various committees, and many volunteer at the Ranch as docents and in other capacities. Our officers remain the same as last year. New directors are Katie Beacock, Susie Coleman and Ivan Obolensky. New to our advisory board are Jane Ferguson and David Duncan who move over from the board of directors. Pat Dillaway and Laurette Lau join the advisory board as well.

BOOKSTORE

The ACR bookstore is open for your holiday shopping convenience Tuesday through Friday from 1:30 until 4:00 p.m. It will be open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, December 9 as well. Freshly stocked with your favorite merchandise, its the place to shop for the holidays.

STATE AWARD

Dr. Martin Griffin, one of A.C.R.'s founders, was awarded the Gold Medal for Superior Accomplishment from the State of California for his work in eliminating the Hepatitis B virus among residents and staff at the state development centers. Through his meritorious work in heading the Hepatitis B and AIDS Task Force during the past six years, the number of Hepatitis B cases fell from 22 cases in 1982 to no cases in 1988 or 89. Congratulations Marty!

—DAN MURPHY

AUDUBON VIDEO

To order your favorite Audubon video programs you can simply phone (800) 523-5503 and use a credit card. Nine programs are available on video cassette in either VHS or Beta at \$29.98 each, at a shipping cost of \$4.00 for the first and \$.50 for each additional cassette.

Those available are:

California Condor
Black-footed Ferret
Panthers and Cheetahs
Galapagos
Woodstorks
Ducks—Under Siege
Sea Turtles
Whales!
Grizzly and Man

By ordering before Dec. 31, 1989 members of Audubon can take advantage of a \$15 discount for every three purchased. Mention this offer when calling.

To accomplish the transaction by mail write National Audubon Video/INO-VISION, P.O. Box 576, Itasca, IL 60143-0576.

PROOFREADER

The GULL was no more than delivered when calls began to come in from members of GGAS who were willing to help as proofreaders. The first to call, Jim McCracken, has accepted, and the others have been notified and agreed to be "in reserve" should they be needed in future. It is most gratifying to experience this warm and numerous response.



Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc.

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Bruce Howard

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA RARE BIRD ALERT (recorded) (415) 528-0288

Update: 524-5592

Mail for all individuals listed above should be sent to GGAS office.

Send address changes to office promptly; Post office does not forward *THE GULL*. Monthly meetings: second Thursday, 7:30 p.m. Joint membership — local and national \$30 per year (individual); \$38 (family); includes *AUDUBON* Magazine and *THE GULL*; to join, make checks payable to National Audubon Society and send to GGAS office to avoid delay in receiving *THE GULL*. Membership renewals should be sent directly to the National Audubon office. Subscriptions to *THE GULL* separately \$10 per year; single issues \$1. High school and college student membership \$18 per year. Senior citizen individual \$21, senior citizen family \$23. Associate Membership in Golden Gate Audubon Society, \$10 per year.

**The Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. was established January 25, 1917,
and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948.**

The *Gull* deadline is the first of the month for the following month, and July 15th for September issue.